

*May 11 / Administration of George Bush, 1992*

reach out: Reach out to young parents, make sure they know what they need to do, and then help them to do it; reach out to community organizations; reach out to the private sector; and reach across the artificial lines in our Government so that any program that touches young children and their parents will become an opportunity point for better health.

We have new kinds of problems, and so we've got to think in new ways. We need to think about all the opportunities that we have to draw in young families who may be left out today, to help them, to inform them. We need to enlist them and enlist our communities to work together to help them. All the community organizations have

a tremendous role to play. It's already worked in our six demonstration immunization cities, and I am confident that it's going to work in Healthy Start and in more immunization communities all around this great country.

Thank you all for your leadership. Again, my respects to the two Members of Congress here. Thank the doctors here, and thank all of you working in the communities to make life just a little better for the kids and for the families out there. Thank you all for coming.

*Note: The President spoke at 11:16 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.*

## Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on the President's Meeting With Foreign Minister Roland Dumas of France

*May 11, 1992*

President Bush and French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas discussed a number of bilateral and regional issues during a 20-minute Oval Office meeting. Minister Dumas said that the development of increased unity within the European Community must be accompanied by efforts to rein-

force ties between Europe and the United States. The President welcomed the desire to strengthen transatlantic ties, which the United States shares completely. The President also noted the need to conclude the Uruguay round trade negotiations.

## Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion With the Weed and Seed Revitalization Committee and Community Leaders in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

*May 11, 1992*

*Mr. Michael Baylson.* Mr. President, good afternoon. We are honored to welcome you to our "Weed and Seed" neighborhood to meet with the members of the Weed and Seed Neighborhood Revitalization Committee and other community residents.

We want to tell you about some of the innovative programs in Philadelphia. For example, the Violent Traffickers Project, with whom you just met a few minutes ago, has been active in this neighborhood, making

substantial progress arresting the larger drug-trafficking gangs. Also, last week a Federal grand jury returned indictments against 72 defendants, allegedly members of the Cali cartel, their customers, or other major Philadelphia drug dealers, for dumping drugs into this community.

Mr. President, welcome to our "Weed and Seed" area.

*The President.* Michael, thank you. What I really want to do is listen to people in the

community and from the city. I salute Michael for the job he's doing as U.S. attorney; thank the commissioner for being at my side through this tour. I expect you're going to miss him, but I think you're looking forward to his arrival to his new, enormous challenge.

Let me just say, I don't know if you've met Governor Martinez and Digger Phelps. Governor Martinez runs our National Drug Control program. And Digger, whom you all know by reputation, I'm sure, who understands a lot about the inner cities, he's got a key role in our "Weed and Seed" program. We believe in this program. I know that Members of Congress who are with us here, including Senator Specter and these House Members, agree. And we want to see it be successful. But I came here to listen, and I really appreciate you all taking the time to tell me what's on your minds and what you think would be best for the community and then see what we can do.

*Mr. Baylson.* Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like Commissioner Williams to just say a few words first, and then he'll be followed by Sister Carol, who is seated to your left.

*Commissioner Willie Williams.* Thank you very much, Mike. Mr. President, this area that we're in right now, at some time not in the too distant past, was probably one of the worst drug-dealing areas in the city of Philadelphia. You literally could not have walked through the schoolyard or driven even your car up there without being harassed by drug dealers. We had strong cooperation from the citizens. They simply asked us to "Please do whatever you can. We will work with you. We will stand behind you in trying to rid the area of some very, very structured and organized drug gangs."

We went about it through a combination of traditional policing methods, using city police, using State, Federal assistance, using the community's support, and starting out with the Violent Traffickers Project, I think. Within a 2-year period, we locked up at least 150 to 200 people. Ninety-eight percent of them pled guilty; the other 2 percent were found guilty in court. As I said, we were running 100 percent conviction rate. We snatched entire structured, organized gangs out of the neighborhood.

The next piece that we're now involved with is what we now call the "Weed and Seed," where law enforcement has come in and, to some degree, weeded out the very difficult people. It is now up to the city, State, and Federal agencies and the communities working together to reclaim their own neighborhoods for themselves, working together. That's where we're at right now, and Sister Carol and others here are all part of this collective effort from community, from government, from law enforcement, and from other various volunteers.

*The President.* Thank you, Commissioner.

[A participant spoke on community revitalization funding and enterprise zones.]

*The President.* Well, I hope we can do something on this enterprise zones. I will try to keep it out of the partisan politics.

Ironically, Sister, maybe not so ironically, but at every level in Los Angeles, in the community, community groups wanted that; they felt that that would draw jobs into the community. So I think it's a new idea in that it's never been tried at the Federal level. Literally green-line these areas and have a, say, zero capital gains so you can attract businesses. So we're going to try, and I'm glad that you all support that.

[A participant presented documentation on the problems of obtaining mortgage insurance and ensuring residents' input on funding decisions.]

*The President.* I have one question on the—do we have time to ask one question on the red-lining and stuff? Is that a Federal law or a State law or a city—what is it?

*Participant.* From what I know it's in the State legislature here. And we met with six banks; we put a housing group together. The banks say they're ready to lend money for low-income housing and for mortgages, but then the insurance companies, who were sitting at the same table, tell us that they will not approve mortgages in any community where there's a 10 percent vacancy in the block. And all that does is create the whole block to go. We can't lock these blocks and bring them back.

What we need is, we need HUD and we

need the Pennsylvania Housing Authority to come to meetings and work with us to try to look at the numbers of houses in these blocks and either rehabilitate property or tear it down and make a garden out of it for the property next to it, so we can move on and start to tie some of these neighborhoods together again.

*The President.* Thanks.

[A participant presented a T-shirt to the President.]

*The President.* That's very nice. Thank you very much. And good luck, Miriam. Thank you.

[A participant questioned combating the multimillion-dollar drug-trafficking business with limited funds.]

*The President.* Well, I'm not sure that funds is the entire answer. I just came from a project that the commissioner could describe where they have these satellite precincts where the police officers get the confidence of people in the neighborhood and are highly successful in discouraging drugs from being in that area. I don't think it was as much spending as it was community involvement on the part, in this instance, of law enforcement.

Our Federal law enforcement, obviously, should be in support of the locals and support of State law enforcement. I don't think anyone wants to see a Federal police force. Now, we do have Federal Agencies that we can talk about; I mean DEA and the FBI and all that are involved when Federal laws are being broken. But it's a combination, it seems to me.

[The participant said that "Weed and Seed" funding was insufficient.]

*The President.* One, you can't do it with "Weed and Seed" money alone. That's one thing. Two, we are going to the Congress to increase the "Weed and Seed" funds, and I think we'll be successful. But it's got to be that along with these other programs, I think most people would agree, because I don't think the "Seed" money itself will do it.

I'll tell you, one of the key concepts is this concept of trying to attract businesses to the community. The sister spoke about

enterprise zones, and of course, that would help because it would give people a break. One of the things that is happening out in Los Angeles right now is a major push to bring private businesses in by Peter Ueberroth. I don't know if you're read about his approach, but it's one the commissioner will be running into out there. And I must say, the guy's very optimistic about being able to do that. Of course, that, in the final analysis, is the key, a job in the private sector.

So we're going to push for the enterprise zones that will make it more attractive for companies to come in and locate in this area. Give people a tax break so—it's wasted—if you don't have any businesses, you're not losing revenue, there's just nothing happening there.

So we think that this approach, coupled with the homeownership concept on our public housing and urban development program is a very good start on the part of the Federal Government. And so I hope—and "Weed and Seed," that's the third element of it, with more funding.

[A participant expressed appreciation for Federal support of local law enforcement programs.]

*The President.* Thank you.

[A participant spoke on the need for youth-oriented programs.]

*The President.* Thank you very much.

[A participant requested additional funding for programs to benefit children.]

*The President.* Thank you very much.

[A participant emphasized the importance of helping children.]

*The President.* Thank you, Felicia. Beautifully said.

[Another participant reiterated the importance of helping children.]

*The President.* Thank you, Tomasita.

May I ask a question? I don't know who could answer it. But I mentioned in the State of the Union Address a visit I had from the mayors, including Tom Bradley out in L.A. and a lot of smalltown mayors, you know, women, men, Republican, Democrat, liberal, conservative. They came to

me, and they said, “The number one problem we see in the problem with the city is the demise of the American family.” Can somebody make suggestions? Of course, you know, we think that what Ms. Melendez is doing, and other educators, is a big, important part of how you overcome that. But if anyone has suggestions—and I’m not sure it’s a government thing—but has suggestions as to how you strengthen or turn around the decline in the family, it would be extraordinarily helpful.

We’ve appointed a Commission, and I hope it’s not just one more study effort that gets filed and gathers dust. I’m just quoting what these mayors told me. And I mentioned it out there in Los Angeles, and several of the churches say, “Well, you know, when you have a decline in the family, the church has to fill in a lot more.” And then there was a very active boys club.

But I just wonder if there’s anything legislatively that’s keeping the family apart, making it easier or better off if they live apart rather than together. We’re looking at the laws from that end, but I’d welcome any comments. It’s a very complex subject, but it is—John, maybe?

*[A participant spoke on the importance of strong families. Another participant spoke on the need to change attitudes and increase self-esteem in at-risk communities.]*

*The President.* Thank you very much. I think the answer is to try some new ideas. What we’re doing we will all concede is not enough. Some programs, certainly community programs, are an example for everybody. I mean, they work. And what we’ve heard today is something new—or what I heard. It may not be new to Philadelphia, but it’s new to a lot of the country in terms of the “Weed” part of it.

So I think the answer to your question is, we’ve got to try these new approaches that hopefully will not only encourage community service, like the “Seed”-ing part of the “Weed and Seed,” but also bring jobs into the community from which you can then have more normal family lives. But

that would be a very easy answer to a very complicated question.

*[The participant said that attitudes throughout the Nation must be changed.]*

*The President.* Great.

*[A participant stressed the need for more funds to support community leaders and local programs, and questioned the value of tax breaks for the poor.]*

*The President.* Let me clarify one thing. Maybe you misunderstood part of what I said. I wasn’t talking about tax breaks for a guy who doesn’t have a job. What the enterprise zones does is talk about tax breaks for people that are willing to set up a business in an area so that it will be like a magnet, hopefully drawing jobs in there, even though the area may not be as attractive a part of the city or something like that.

So that was the only point I wanted to add here because I think it really will work. But we’re trying hard to get it done anyway, see if it works.

*Mr. Baylson.* Mr. President, I’d like to thank you very much. The people around this table have worked very hard to put together our “Weed and Seed” application. And I have told them that if the enterprise zone bill passes, there will be more funds for “Weed and Seed” activities in this or the next fiscal year. And we pledge that we’re going to do our damndest to make a difference in this neighborhood.

*The President.* I think you obviously already are. But I’m most impressed with the community spirit, because what they’re saying is, “How can we help some more?”

*Mr. Baylson.* Right.

*The President.* Thank you very much, very much.

*Note: The exchange began at 5:10 p.m. in the gymnasium at St. Boniface Church. In his remarks, the President referred to Willie Williams, Philadelphia police commissioner, and Peter Ueberroth, chairman of the Rebuild L.A. Committee.*